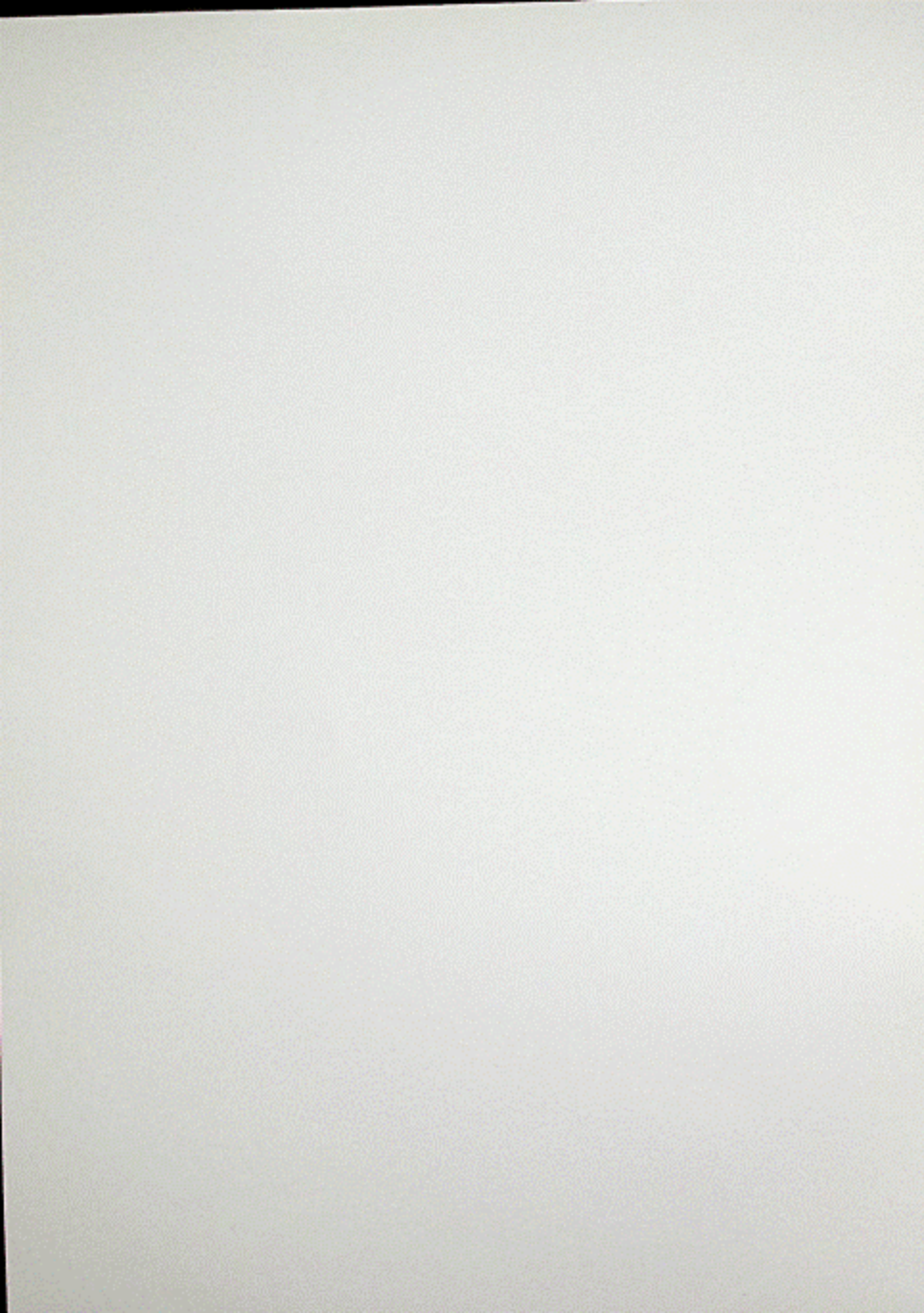




SHAP CALENDAR OF RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

**AUGUST 1997
DECEMBER 1998**

**SHAP WORKING PARTY
ON WORLD RELIGIONS
IN EDUCATION**



SHAP CALENDAR OF RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

AUGUST 1997
DECEMBER 1998

Editors
for The Shap Working Party

Riadh El-Droubie
Cherry Gould
Peter Woodward

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THE SHAP WORKING PARTY

In 1969 a conference for those interested in the development of world religions in education was held near the village of Shap in the Lake District. Participants came from a variety of religious backgrounds and represented the full range of education from primary school to university. A working party on world religions in education emerged from this initial conference, taking the name of Shap from the place where it was formed.

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EDITORS' NOTES

We wish at the outset to thank all those contributors who have supplied dates for the coming year. Their help is not only much appreciated. It is also essential if we are to achieve accuracy in the material we present and, at the same time, remain faithful to the ethos of the different faith communities whose festivals we seek to describe.

In our attempts to achieve the latter, we have, in several cases, again enlarged or modified the descriptive entries in the Calendar to make them more 'user friendly', incorporating the type of detail that we hope will help teachers and others relate the information to their customers' needs.

We welcome further comment from our readership to extend the process still further.

Regular readers will see that we have reverted to the inclusion of text for the full 18 months of the Calendar's coverage. This involves a slight increase in the number of pages, but we believe it will make for easier use over the full period it covers.

We continue the practice we introduced last year of giving page numbers that relate to the Shap book *Festivals in World Religions*, edited by Alan Brown and published in 1986 by Longmans. This is now out of print, but a new edition is in preparation with RMEP (Religious and Moral Education Press - a subsidiary of Chansitor Publications Ltd). We expect this will be published in April, 1998 at a price of £19.95. We hope that next year's Calendar can be cross-referenced to both editions. Copies will be available from the Shap Working Party at the National Society's RE Centre. See next page for fuller detail.

The task of obtaining festival dates is not a straightforward one and it is the complexity of this process which prevents earlier publication of the Calendar each year. Many dates are constant fixtures and remain the same year after year (eg Christian saints' days and many Japanese festivals), and certain others can be forecast for several years ahead with a reasonable degree of accuracy (Jewish, Muslim, Christian, for the most part). There are those, however, mostly in the Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, Parsi, and Sikh traditions, which are not determined, in many cases, until late spring of the previous year, and obtaining these dates from our various sources, checking on their accuracy as far as we can, and then inserting them into the updated Calendar makes earlier publication extremely difficult.

We are currently working at this aspect, and hope next year to be able to forecast for two or three years ahead the likely occurrence of a *few of the key dates* (eg

Pesach, Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha) that users often request to help them when making arrangements (eg for factory, office or school closures) that will relate to local community needs. In particular requests have been received for the year 2,000, whose events are being planned further in advance than usual. Such forecasts on our part must *inevitably* be *provisional* in many cases, and some will merely point to the week or even the month when the festival is likely to be celebrated. We hope to offer some guidance, however, that may be of help to our customers. Watch this space next year for further information.

Riadh El-Droubie
Cherry Gould
Peter Woodward

FESTIVALS IN WORLD RELIGIONS

The Shap Book on Festivals in World Religions, published by Longmans in 1986, is out of print.

In response to many requests it is to be reprinted
by Religious and Moral Education Press in

APRIL 1998 at a cost of £19.95.

Each Author of a chapter in the original book has agreed to modify and update the previous material and there will be fresh chapters on Festivals in Primary and Secondary Schools. As before, the book will relate closely to the annual Shap Calendar, providing illustrative material for description and celebration.

To reserve your copy, please place your order when sending payment for the Shap Calendar and Journal.

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Acknowledgement

The editors would like to thank the following people for helping with this calendar:

Hugh Adamson, National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha, is of the UK
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Womens's World Day of Prayer Office

REFERENCES OF SACRED BOOKS USED IN THE CALENDAR

- CHRISTIAN: *Good News Bible*, The Bible Societies Collins/Fontana, 1976.
ISBN 0564 00401 4 [Bible Society], 0 00 512633 9 [Collins].
- JEWISH: *The Living Torah*, The Five Books of Moses and the Haftarat by
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- MUSLIM: *The Holy Qur'an*, Translation and Commentary by Yusuf Ali, Dar
Al-Arabia, Beirut, Lebanon.

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SHAP CALENDAR OF WORLD RELIGIONS 1997-1998

IMPORTANT

Page number references given in the text are to the Book
"Festivals in World Religions" published by the Shap Working Party
For further information about the book please see Editors' Notes.

AUGUST 1997

- | | | |
|-------|--------------|---|
| 6 | [CHRISTIAN] | THE TRANSFIGURATION: When Jesus went up a mountain with three of his disciples, Peter, James and John, they saw him transformed, saw Moses and Elijah with him and heard a voice saying, "This is my own dear Son with whom I am pleased - listen to him". For Christians, this confirms the divine nature of Jesus. An important festival for Orthodox Christians. Matthew 17:1-17, Mark 9:2-13 and Luke 9:28-36. P. 101. |
| 12 | [JEWISH] | TISHA B'AV: Full day fast mourning the destruction of the first and second Temples in Jerusalem and other tragedies in Jewish history. The Book of Lamentations is read. |
| 12-21 | [ZORASTRIAN] | FARVARDIGAN Last ten days of the year during which the Fravashis or souls of the departed are welcomed and entertained. The five Gathas or hymns composed by Zarathustra are recited on the last five "Gatha" days. P. 250-252. |
| 15 | [CHRISTIAN] | ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY: Celebrates the 'taking up' of Mary, body and soul, to heaven. Most Catholic communities mark the festival with processions and fetes. On this day the Dormition (Falling-Asleep of the Blessed Virgin Mary) is kept by Orthodox Christians. The Falling-Asleep means the death. P. 97-98. |
| 18 | [HINDU] | RAKSHA BANDHAN: This festival is about brotherly protection ['raksha' means 'protection' and 'bandhan' 'to tie']. Sisters tie coloured thread amulets on to their brothers' wrists and give them an Indian sweet. The amulet symbolises protection from evil. They are given gifts [usually money] in return. NB Cousins are included as brothers and sisters. P. 126-127. |
| 22 | [ZORASTRIAN] | NO RUZ: New Year's Day on the Shenshai calendar. P. 252-253. |

24 [HINDU]

JANAMASHTAMI / KRISHNA JAYANTI: Birthday of Krishna. Krishna is a very popular avatar or incarnation of Vishnu and this festival is celebrated widely. Many Hindus fast till midnight, the time of Krishna's birth. Those unable to fast will take fruit and milk. In the temples Krishna is welcomed with singing, dancing and sweets. In some homes and in temples an image of the newborn Krishna is put in a cradle and special sweets [eg the powder panjiri, given traditionally to women after childbirth] are offered and distributed. P. 129-130.

27 [ZORASTRIAN]

KHORDAD SAL: Birthday of Zarathustra. P. 252-255.

30 - Sept. 6
[JAIN]

PARYUSHANA-PARVA: Various celebrated as an eight or ten day period. Mendicant teachers, whose lifestyle is emulated by lay Jains during this time, give sermons about Mahavira and his teachings and read the Kalpa Sutra. On the last day, confession of all sins is made and the forgiveness of friends and relatives is sought before resolving goodwill to all humanity. P. 146-147.

SEPTEMBER 1997

* [CHRISTIAN]

HARVEST FESTIVAL: Displays of various foods are made in church and services are held to thank God for his goodness. Often the food is distributed afterwards to the elderly and those in need. Emphasis is now placed on the fruits of society and a wider interpretation than just the harvest of the fields is made. P. 82.

6 [HINDU]

GANESH-CHATURTHI: Birthday of Ganesha. The elephant-headed deity is seen as the remover of obstacles and is worshipped at the beginning of all new projects such as getting married, taking exams or moving house. This festival is especially observed by Maharashtrians. P. 128-129.

11 [RASTAFARIANS]

ETHIOPIAN NEW YEAR'S DAY: Rastafarians have a four year cycle, each year named after an apostle. This is the beginning of the year of Matthew.

23 [JAPANESE]

SHUBUN NO HI (Higan): Marks the autumn equinox. As at the spring equinox, harmony and balance are the themes, sutras are recited and the graves of relatives are visited. P. 164.

THE NATIONAL RE FESTIVAL

6-10 October 1997

The National RE Festival will be celebrating religious education throughout the country in schools and different venues. On October 6th events will focus in London, on the 7th in Edinburgh, Glasgow on the 8th, in Cardiff on the 9th and then, after the week, in Leicester on the 13th and 14th. All enquiries about the festival should be directed to: Savita Ayling, Director, National Religious Education Festival, Tel: 0181 923 8383 Fax: 0181 923 8844

OCTOBER 1997

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| <p>* [BUDDHIST]</p> | <p>KATHINA DAY: At the end of the three months' Rains Retreat of monks in Theravada Buddhism, new Kathina robes are offered by lay people. The date varies according to the rainy season in different countries. P.43, P.48 [Sri Lanka], P.49-50 [Burma], P.52 [Thailand].</p> |
| <p>2-3 [JEWISH]</p> | <p>ROSH HASHANA: [New Year's Day-5758 AM] celebrates the creation of the world. This festival begins ten days of repentance and self examination during which God sits in judgement on every individual. The blowing of the ram's horn [shofar] in the synagogue is a reminder of Abraham's sacrifice of a ram instead of his son, Isaac. Apples dipped in honey are eaten in the hope of a 'sweet' year. The greeting is Leshanah Tovah Tikatev [May you be inscribed for a good year]. Genesis 22 Leviticus 23:24-25. P. 193-196 1515.</p> |
| <p>2-11 [HINDU]</p> | <p>NAVARATRI/DURGA PUJA/DUSSERAH: While known by different names, this is one of the few festivals celebrated across India. Navaratri means 'nine nights' which is how long the festival lasts. The last three days are the most important. In North India the performance of the Ram lila during Durga Puja commemorates Rama's victory over Ravana, the demon king of Sri Lanka. Also in Northern India, and in Bengal in particular, the goddess Durga is worshipped on the eighth day. Some Panjabis mark this day by giving food and other items to young girls. P. 130-133.</p> |
| <p>11 [JEWISH]</p> | <p>YOM KIPPUR [Day of Atonement]: This is the final day of the ten days of repentance. It is the holiest day of the year in the Jewish calendar. The Bible calls it "the Sabbath of Sabbaths" which is also marked by "afflicting the soul" - expressed through a total fast lasting 25 hours. Jews spend the eve and most of the day in prayer asking for forgiveness for past wrongs and resolving to improve in future. The Book of Jonah is read. A common greeting is G'mar Chatimah Tovah [May you finally be sealed for good]. Leviticus 16:4-34, Leviticus 23:27-32. P. 196-199 .</p> |
| <p>16-24 [JEWISH]</p> | <p>SUKKOT: A harvest festival commemorating the 40 years that the Jews spent in the wilderness on the way from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. A temporary hut or booth-called a Sukkah - is used during this time to eat meals in and for socialising. In hot countries families may live in them during the festival. The roof, which has to be open to the elements, is covered with branches and decorated with fruit. Four species, the lulav [the palm branch], the etrog [a citrus fruit], the hadas [myrtle] and the aravah [willow] are used at the festival. Leviticus 23:33-43 P. 187-190.</p> |
| <p>20 [BAHA'I]</p> | <p>ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF THE BAB: The Bab [the title means "Gate"] was born in Shiraz, Persia in 1819. He called</p> |



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people to religious renewal and to await the coming of a new messenger from God. Baha'is believe that this latter figure was Baha'u'llah. P. 26.

20-26

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR WORLD PEACE: Prayers from the sources of several different world religions are published each year in a special leaflet for use in this week, which receives the support of members of many religious communities.

24

[JEWISH]

SIMCHAT TORAH: Marks the completion of the annual cycle of reading from the Torah. As the reading should be continuous, a second scroll is begun again as soon as the final portion of the Torah is read; so, as the reading from Deuteronomy ends, with the next breath, Genesis begins. All the Torah scrolls are paraded around the synagogue with children dancing and singing. Progressive Jews celebrate this festival one day earlier. P.191-193.

30 - Nov 3

[HINDU]

DIVALI (DEEPAVALI): In Hinduism, a New Year Festival lasting one to five days, during which lights are hung out and fireworks are exploded. For both Hindus and Sikhs it is a festival of light coinciding with the darkest night of the lunar month. Various interpretations are given to the festival in different parts of India but it is generally associated with Lakshmi, goddess of wealth and prosperity or with the victorious return of Rama and Sita to the kingdom of Ayodhya after the exile. Diwali marks the beginning of the financial year. P.134-136.

[SIKH]

Sikhs also celebrate Diwali as the sixth Guru, Guru Hargobind, was released from Gwalior prison on this day. The Guru refused to accept release when it was given by the Emperor, Jehangir, until 52 imprisoned Hindu princes were also given their freedom. To meet the Emperor's condition that only those who could hold onto his cloak could leave, the Guru had a coat with long tassels made. The Golden Temple in Amritsar is illuminated and there are firework displays. It is a time for new clothes, presents and sweets. P.237-239.

NOVEMBER 1997

1

[CHRISTIAN]

ALL SAINTS' DAY: (All Hallows', originally All Martyrs) This provides a chance to offer thanks for the work and witness of all saints, recognizing that not all are known or specially celebrated. Many Churches stress this day, rather than Hallowe'en which falls the day before, by holding events especially for children. P. 99-100.

2

[CHRISTIAN]

ALL SOULS' DAY: On this day in particular the departed are remembered and prayed for.

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| 2 | [RASTAFARIAN] | ANNIVERSARY OF THE CROWNING OF HAILE SELASSIE I: One of the holiest days of the Rastafarian year, it celebrates Haile Selassie's accession to the Ethiopian throne. |
| 9 | [NATIONAL] | REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY: The Sunday nearest to Armistice Day, devoted to remembering the dead of two World Wars and subsequent wars. |
| 12 | [BAHA'I] | ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF BAHU'LLAH: Founder of the Baha'i faith who was born, eldest son of a Persian nobleman, in Tehran, Persia in 1817. P26. P. 166. |
| 14 | [SIKH] | BIRTHDAY OF GURU NANAK: (1469) The first Sikh Guru. To celebrate such birthdays, an akhand path, a complete uninterrupted reading of the Guru Granth Sahib, is begun about two days before so that it will be finished on the festival. Sikhs gather at the gurdwara to hear sermons and sing hymns about the life of the first Guru. The congregation will share a meal [langar] from the free kitchen. The gurdwaras are usually illuminated and there are firework displays. P. 240-242, P. 244. |
| 15 | [JAPANESE] | SHICHI-GO-SAN: (Seven-Five-Three) Girls of seven, boys of five and girls of three are dressed up in new clothes and taken to a Shinto shrine to pray for their future wellbeing. |
| 26 | [MUSLIM] | THE PROPHET'S NIGHT JOURNEY AND ASCENSION [LAILAT-UL-ISRA' WAL MI'RAJ]: Celebrates the journey of the Prophet Muhammad, in the tenth year of his prophethood, from Makkah to Jerusalem and through the heavens to the presence of God all in a night. On the Journey, the command to pray five times a day was given. The rock in Jerusalem from which Muhammad ascended is now marked by the Dome of the Rock. Muslims celebrate by reading the Qur'an and saying additional prayers. Surah:2:144, 17:1. The full story is in the Hadith together with the times of prayer. P. 231. |
| 30 | [CHRISTIAN] | ST ANDREW'S DAY: The patron saint of Scotland since the 8th century. Andrew was an apostle and brother of Peter. In the Anglican communion he is associated with missionary activity. P.100. |
| 30 | [CHRISTIAN] | ADVENT SUNDAY: The start of the Christian year four Sundays before Christmas. It is often celebrated by lighting the first candle in the advent crown - a circular wreath of greenery. A further three candles are lit on subsequent Sundays, culminating with the Christmas candle on the 25th December. This signifies the transition from darkness to light. P. 82-83. |

DECEMBER 1997

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|-------|-------------|--|
| 4 | [SIKH] | MARTYRDOM OF GURU TEGH BAHADUR - (1675): The ninth Guru was executed under orders from the Moghul emperor in public opposite the Red Fort in Delhi for upholding an individual's right to worship in the manner of his/her choice. P.240-242, P.244. |
| 8 | [BUDDHIST] | BODHI DAY: Some Buddhists celebrate Gautama's attainment of Enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree in Bodhgaya, North India, on this day. P. 45-47 Sri Lanka, P. 49 Burma, P. 50 Thailand, P54 Tibet [all Birth, Enlightenment and Death]. |
| 8 | [CHRISTIAN] | IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY: Celebrates the [mainly Roman Catholic] doctrine that Mary herself was born free from Original Sin, leaving her sinless for the bearing of Jesus. P. 96. |
| 14 | [MUSLIM] | THE NIGHT OF FORGIVENESS [LAILAT-UL-BARA'H]: On the fourteenth of Sha'ban, the eighth month of the Muslim Calendar and two weeks before Ramadan, Muslims seek forgiveness for their sins. Muslims believe that it is on this night that a person's destiny is fixed for the coming year by God. The night is spent in prayer asking God's guidance and forgiveness. Many Muslims fast on the 14th in preparation for this night. In some parts of the world, Muslims visit the graves of relatives and the giving of charity is also traditional. In some places the night is marked with firework displays. P. 233. |
| 24 | [CHRISTIAN] | CHRISTMAS EVE: Evening carol services and Midnight Masses inaugurate Christmas. Santa Claus [from the Dutch Sinter Klaus] is a legendary figure based on St Nicholas of Myra, who is supposed to bring presents to children on Christmas Eve. P. 83, P. 84. |
| 24-31 | [JEWISH] | HANUKAH: Celebrates the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem after it was recaptured from the Syrian Greeks by the Maccabee brothers in 165 BCE. For the eight evenings of the festival, candles are lit from right to left in a hanukkiyah, a nine-branched menorah - one candle for each evening. The ninth candle is the shamash [the servant candle] from which the other candles are lit. Foods cooked with oil - such as doughnuts and latkes [potato cakes] are traditional to remember the miracle with oil that happened at this time. A game of dreidel is popular with children to commemorate "the great miracle that happened there". P. 201-205. |
| 25 | [CHRISTIAN] | CHRISTMAS DAY: Celebrates the birth of Jesus who Christians believe to be the son of God. The Christian focus on the Incarnation [God becoming man] has led this to be a major festival in the Christian faith, although the over-commercialisation and secularisation of Christmas has obscured some of the significance of this |

30 Dec-28 Jan 98
[MUSLIM]

festival. Christmas carols, plays and evergreens are associated with this time and nativity sets are displayed in many churches and in some homes. Gifts are reminders of the offerings brought to the infant Jesus. Originally these and Christmas boxes were given on the 26th December - **Boxing Day**. Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 2:1-7 P. 83-85.

RAMADAN: The month of fasting from dawn to sunset. To the Muslim, fasting means abstaining from all food, drink, smoking and marital relations during daylight hours. It is an exercise in self-discipline and enables everyone to have some experience of deprivation. Fasting [sawm] is one of the five pillars of Islam. After the custom of the Prophet, the fast is traditionally broken by taking dates and water. Travellers, those who are sick and women who are pregnant or menstruating are temporarily excused from fasting but they will make this up at another time. Those who are not able to fast should give charity to compensate for the lost days. Children may be encouraged to fast although it is not compulsory until maturity. As the Muslim year is a lunar year, Ramadan moves forward by ten/eleven days every year. Surah 2:183-188. P.218-220.

31 [JAPANESE]

OMISOKA: Japanese festival which prepares for the new year by cleansing (Shinto-related) home shrines and (Buddhist-related) altars. The bells of Buddhist temples are struck 108 times to warn against the 108 evils to be overcome. P. 168.

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AP03/95

JANUARY 1998

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|-------|-------------|---|
| 1 | [CHRISTIAN] | THE CIRCUMCISION OR NAMING OF JESUS: Celebrates the circumcision of Jesus in accordance with Jewish custom. Luke 2:21. |
| 1 | [JAPANESE] | GANJITSU: New Year's Day celebrations are sometimes extended for up to three days during which businesses are closed, families are together, decorations are put up and the first visit of the year is paid to local Shinto shrines. P. 153-154. |
| 6 | [CHRISTIAN] | EPIPHANY: Celebrates the coming of the magi/ Wise Men to the baby Jesus. It is the twelfth day of Christmas. It is particularly important in the Orthodox church where the baptism of Jesus and his first miracle at Cana are remembered. Matthew 2:1-12 P.79, P.86. |
| 6 | [SIKH] | BIRTHDAY OF GURU GOBIND SINGH: (1666CE) The tenth Guru, who instituted the '5 K's and established the Order of the Khalsa on Vaisakhi [Baisakhi]. The main feature will be an akhand path, an unbroken reading of the Guru Granth Sahib which will normally last for 48 hours. P240-242. |
| 6-7 | [CHRISTIAN] | CHRISTMAS EVE AND DAY (Russian Orthodox): Those Orthodox Churches which retain the Julian calendar, rather than change to the Gregorian calendar, celebrate all fixed festivals 13 days after the Western Churches, so 6-7 January in the civil calendar are 24-25 December in the church calendar. |
| 14 | [HINDU] | MAKAR SANKRANT: [Lohri is the name for the festival in Panjab; it is called Pongal in Tamil Nadu] - An unusual festival in that it is based on the solar calendar, whereas most other festivals follow the lunar calendar. It currently falls on January 12th, 13th or 14th. It is a day for almsgiving and patching up quarrels. Tamils eat a rice dish - pongal. For Panjabi families [including some Sikhs] Lohri is celebrated following the birth of a son. A fire is lit and peanuts and sesame sweets are eaten around it. Foods eaten include rice mixed with sugar, pancakes and halva. Cornmeal chapatis and mustard leaf constitute the traditional meal. P113. |
| 18-25 | [CHRISTIAN] | WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY: This week was first set aside in 1908. The growing commitment to ecumenism has given the event increased impetus. Special services are held, dialogue on unity is encouraged and pulpits are interchanged. |
| 24 | [MUSLIM] | LAILAT-UL-QADR: The "Night of Power" commemorates the night in which the Prophet Muhammad received the first revelation of the Qur'an. Muslims believe that this night is kept secret by God, but the Prophet told Muslims that they can seek it in the last ten days of Ramadan. Many Muslims spend the night praying and |

studying the Qur'an. It is celebrated usually on the 27th day [the night of the 26th] of Ramadan. Muslims pray all night at every mosque. Surah 97:1-5 - first revelation 2:185. P. 218.

28 [CHINESE]

YUAN TAN: New Year's Day, which is the most important event in the traditional Chinese calendar and marks the beginning of the first lunar month. The festival is colorfully celebrated with fireworks, dances (such as the famous Lion Dance) and the giving of gifts, flowers and sweets. Gold is a dominant colour to symbolise the wish for prosperity and red is also much used as a lucky colour. Business accounts should be settled and all debts paid before the new year begins. Celebrations can last three or more days. 1998 will be the year of the Tiger. P. 66-68.

29-31 [MUSLIM]

EID-UL-FITR: This festival of the Breaking of the Fast comes at the end of Ramadan and at the start of the first of Shawwal, the tenth month of the Muslim Calendar. This Eid is known as the Small Festival, "Al-Eid Al-Saghir", as it lasts only three days compared with the four days of Eid-ul-Adha, the Festival of Sacrifice. It is a time for almsgiving - the charity of the fast, Zakat-ul-Fitr, which is paid during Ramadan, must be paid before the Eid Prayer. This is a time for new clothes, good food and presents for children. The festival is a time for family get-togethers and contact with friends, especially with those who live far away. The community will assemble at the mosque or at a large place which will accommodate the whole community of the town or village for Eid prayer. The traditional greeting is "Eid Mubarak" - "Happy and blessed Eid". [There is no reference in the Qur'an but in the tradition of the Prophet.] P. 220-223.

31 [HINDU]

VASANTA PANCHAMI/SARASWATI PUJA: Widely celebrated in North India. Marks the beginning of spring. It is usually linked with Saraswati, the goddess of learning and the arts. Yellow is the associated colour. P. 116.

FEBRUARY 1998

2 [CHRISTIAN]

THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD [Catholic] / PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE [Anglican]: This is often called **Candlemas** from the custom of congregations holding lighted candles at the celebration in church. It celebrates the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple [formerly the Purification of the BVM], hence its association with the Nunc Dimittis. Luke 2:22-38. P. 102.

3 [JAPANESE]

SETSUBUN/BEAN SCATTERING: The day for the Bean Scattering ceremony performed both in homes and in temples. P. 156.

7	[CHINESE]	TENG CHIEH: This is the Lantern Festival which marks the first full moon of the year and the lengthening of the days. Public offices reopen after the New Year holiday. Strings of lanterns in various designs are hung out as decoration. P. 68.
11	[JEWISH]	TU B'SHEVAT: A delightful minor festival which celebrates the New Year for trees. New trees are planted and a special attempt is made to eat fruit from Israel. P. 209.
15	[BUDDHIST]	PARINIRVANA: Mahayanists mark the final passing away from this world of Gautama Buddha at Kushinagara, India, at the age of 80.
24	[CHRISTIAN]	SHROVE TUESDAY (Pancake Day): The day is set aside for repentance and absolution in preparation for Lent. The name derives from an ancient word to do with absolution from sin. More popularly, it is a day of eating and enjoyment. In Britain it is known as 'Pancake Day' as pancakes were originally made to use up all the rich foods before Lent. Elsewhere it is a time for carnivals and the Mardi Gras [Fat Tuesday]. P. 86.
25	[CHRISTIAN]	ASH WEDNESDAY: The first day of Lent when Christians remember the forty days that Jesus spent in the wilderness and the temptations he faced during this time. In Catholic and some Anglican churches, services are held where the worshipper's forehead is marked with a cross of ash which has been made from burning the palm crosses of the previous year - hence the name Ash Wednesday. Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13 P87.
25 Feb-12 Apr	[CHRISTIAN]	LENT: A period of forty days [not counting Sundays] that lead up to Easter. It is a time of fasting and discipline in preparation for Easter. Traditionally Christians give up something during this time to mark the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness which end on Easter day. Many Christians still do this, but for some the emphasis now is more on following a simpler lifestyle throughout the year. Those who give something up save the cost of these items, perhaps in a box, for Church funds or for a charity. For many Christians it is a time for study groups, prayer and Bible reading. Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-22. P. 86-87.
25	[HINDU]	MAHASHIVRATRI [Great Shiva Night]: Every night of the new moon is dedicated to Shiva but this one is particularly important. It is the night on which Shiva is said to perform the cosmic dance from creation to destruction. Many Hindus fast. All-night prayers focus on Shiva and his shrines and statues. Milk is poured on his symbol, the lingam. P. 116-117.

MARCH 1998

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|----|-------------|---|
| 1 | [CHRISTIAN] | ST DAVID'S DAY: The patron saint of Wales who lived in the 6th century. P. 260. |
| 3 | [HINDU] | BIRTHDAY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA: A Hindu teacher and mystic, born in 1833 who founded the Ramakrishna Vedanta movement. His teachings were formalised into a philosophical structure by his disciple, Swami Vivekananda. P. 117-118. |
| 6 | [CHRISTIAN] | THE WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER: This international, interdenominational prayer movement was begun in 1887. The service material is produced by a different country each year. In 1998 the theme is "Who is my neighbour?" and the order of service has been put together by Madagascar. |
| 10 | [CHRISTIAN] | FIRST DAY OF LENT/THE GREAT FAST [Orthodox]: Unlike the Western tradition which starts Lent on the Wednesday before the first Sunday of Lent, Eastern Churches start Lent on the Monday before the first Sunday. In addition, since Lent is calculated in relation to Easter, it follows that when the Orthodox date for Easter differs from that of the Western Churches, the whole Lenten period will similarly differ. This is the beginning of the Lenten Fast which involves abstinence from meat, fish and dairy products until Easter. P. 80 [Table]. |
| 12 | [HINDU] | HOLI: A spring festival lasting one to five days. Bonfires are lit and coloured powder and dyes are thrown over people. Many of the customs associated with Holi indicate its fertility origins. Various stories are associated with the festival. The throwing of coloured dyes is linked with Krishna and his antics with the gopis or milkmaids. Another story associated with Holi is that of Prahlada and Holika. Prahlada worshipped Vishnu in defiance of his father, King Hiranyakashipu. Prahlada survived when his aunt, Holika, supposedly immune to fire, held him while she sat on a bonfire. P. 118-119. |
| 12 | [JEWISH] | PURIM: Celebrates the saving of the Jewish community of Persia which is told in the Book of Esther [The Megillah]. This is read twice in the synagogue. Haman's name is drowned out with rattles and hooters by the congregation whenever it is read. Many people come in fancy dress. Hamantashen [cakes filled with poppy seeds, literally "Haman's pockets"] are made and eaten at this time. P. 199-201. |
| 17 | [CHRISTIAN] | ST PATRICK'S DAY: The patron saint of Ireland who lived in Britain in the 4th century. After his escape from being held hostage in Ireland, he became a priest and returned there to evangelise. His symbol is the shamrock, sprigs of which are worn on this day. Parades are held in Dublin and elsewhere, often of a secular nature. P. 260. |

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| 19 | [CHRISTIAN] | ST JOSEPH, HUSBAND OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY: A feast in honour of Joseph who, together with Mary, was responsible for Jesus' upbringing. P. 99. |
| 21 | [BAHA'I] | NAW-RUZ: New Year's Day and the end of the nineteen-day fast that concludes the old year. P. 26. |
| 21 | [JAPANESE] | SHUNBUN NO HI (Higan): Marks the spring equinox. As at the autumn equinox, harmony and balance are the themes, sutras are recited and the graves of relatives are visited. P. 159. |
| 21 | [ZOROASTRIAN] | JAMSHEDI NORUZ: New Year's Day according to the Fasli calendar used in Iran. It is a family day and eggs and evergreens figure as symbols of life, continuity and eternity. P. 248-250. |
| 22 | [CHRISTIAN] | MOTHERING SUNDAY (Simnel Sunday): Mid-Lent Sunday [Lent IV]. It has become secularised and more popularly known as Mother's Day. Traditionally, Christians visited their 'mother' church and took gifts to their mothers which often included a simnel cake. P. 261 Mothers' Day. |
| 25 | [CHRISTIAN] | THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD/ BLESSED VIRGIN (Lady Day): Celebrates the announcement to Mary by the angel Gabriel that she is to bear a child and her response in the Magnificat. The day, therefore, gives opportunity to focus on the doctrine of the incarnation. Luke 1:26-38, 46-55. P. 96-97 |
| 29 | [CHRISTIAN] | PASSION SUNDAY: On the 5th Sunday in Lent, Christians begin to concentrate their thoughts on the Passion or suffering of Jesus. |
| 29 | [HINDU] | VARSHA-PRATIPADA: This is the first day of Chaitra, the first month of the Hindu lunar year. It is regarded as an auspicious day for starting any new endeavour, however small. Divali, in the autumn, is also a new year festival - 1998 is 2055 of the Vikrami era. |

APRIL 1998

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|---|-------------|--|
| 5 | [CHINESE] | CH'ING MING / FESTIVAL OF PURE BRIGHTNESS: The first occasion in the year when family graves are visited. After cleansing and sweeping them, offerings are made to spirits and many picnic by the grave to 'join' their ancestors in the feast. Families make a special effort to be together and return to the family graveyard. P. 68-69. |
| 5 | [CHRISTIAN] | PALM SUNDAY: First day of Holy Week i.e. the week which recalls the last week of Jesus' earthly human life. Christians remember his triumphal entry into Jerusalem where later he would be arrested and crucified. In many churches the entry is commemorated with processions, with the congregation carrying symbolic branches of trees or palm leaves folded in the form of a cross. Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-11, Luke 19:28-40, John 12:12-19. P. 87. |

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| 5-11 | [CHRISTIAN] | HOLY WEEK: The most solemn week of the Christian year, in which Christians recall the final week of the life of Jesus. P. 87. |
| 5 | [HINDU] | RAMA NAVAMI: This is the birthday of Rama, the seventh avatar of Vishnu. It is celebrated at twelve noon by arati in front of a picture of Rama swinging in a cradle. P. 121. |
| 7-10 | [MUSLIM] | EID-UL-ADHA / THE FESTIVAL OF SACRIFICE: This major festival [Al-Eid Al Kabeer] marks the end of the Hajj (Pilgrimage to Makkah) on the tenth day of the twelfth month of Dhul-Hijja. The Hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam. Pilgrims sacrifice animals at the village of Mina on their way back to Makkah from Mount Arafat [First Day of Festival], in commemoration of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son, Ishmael. Muslims all over the world, if they can afford it, sacrifice an animal [as Abraham did in substitution for his son Ishmael]. The meat is distributed to the poor, and some is shared with relatives and friends. Sura 37 99-111 and 22:26-33, 3:96-97. P. 224-227. |
| 8 | [JAPANESE] | HANAMATSURI: This flower festival marks the Japanese celebration of the Buddha Shakyamuni's birthday which Mahayanas fix in 565BCE. The flowers accentuate the tradition that the Buddha was born in a garden, so floral shrines are made and an image of the infant Buddha is set in it and bathed. Theravadins celebrate Buddha's birth, enlightenment and passing away all on the same day a little later in the year - full moon in May. P. 159. |
| 9 | [CHRISTIAN] | MAUNDY THURSDAY: The Last Supper is commemorated when Jesus blessed bread and wine and ordered his disciples to remember him whenever they did this. From this instruction comes the institution known under a variety of names - The Eucharist, the Mass, the Holy Communion, the Breaking of Bread - which is the central act of worship in most traditions. In Roman Catholic and some Anglican churches the feet of twelve members of the congregation are washed in remembrance of Jesus' washing of the feet of the twelve disciples. Matthew 26:26-30, Mark 14:22-26, Luke 22:14-20. P. 87-88. |
| 10 | [CHRISTIAN] | GOOD FRIDAY: This commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus. Although essentially a sombre day, it is called 'Good' since, for Christians, it is the ultimate example of God's sacrifice when Jesus gave up his life for the world. Meditative services are held in church to mark the time that Jesus spent on the cross. Traditionally, particularly in the Roman Catholic world, fish rather than meat, is eaten on Fridays. Hot cross buns, although these are now found in supermarkets throughout the year, have become associated with Good Friday. Matthew 27:32-44, Mark 15:21-32, Luke 23:26-43, John 19:17-27. P. 88. |

11 [CHRISTIAN]

HOLY SATURDAY - (Easter Eve): Special services involving the lighting of the Paschal Candle and the renewal of baptismal vows take place in the evening in preparation for Easter. This is the last day of Lent. P. 88-90.

11-18 [JEWISH]

PASSOVER/PESACH: A major eight-day festival when Jews commemorate the Exodus from slavery in Egypt. A highlight is the Seder meal held in homes at the beginning of the festival when the story of the deliverance is recounted following the Haggadah [the Telling, the Story]. Matzah [unleavened bread] is eaten throughout the festival and foods without leaven. There is a great spring cleaning in the home before the festival to ensure that no leaven is in the home during Pesach. Coconut pyramids and matza balls [which are put in soups] are two foods that might be eaten at this time. Exodus 7-12, P. 179-184.

12 [CHRISTIAN]

EASTER DAY: This is the most important festival of the Christian year as it is when Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. Easter eggs are given which symbolise new life. Matthew 28:1-11, Mark 16:1-10, Luke 24:1-12, John 20:1-10. P.90.

13 [SIKH]

VAISAKHI [Baisakhi] - the Sikh New Year Festival: In 1699 on Vaisakhi [Baisakhi] the tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, founded the Order of the Khalsa. Five men, who later came to be known as the Panj Piare [Five Beloved Ones], were prepared to offer their lives when the Guru asked for volunteers. On this day the 'Five Ks', the five outward signs of Sikhism, were made obligatory and Sikh men took the name 'Singh' and women 'Kaur'. The Order of the Khalsa was founded and the initiation ceremony, amrit, was introduced. This is the only Sikh festival which is generally celebrated on the same date each year. P. 236-237.

19 [CHRISTIAN]

EASTER DAY/PASCHA (Orthodox): Since Easter is calculated on a lunar calendar, it moves in relation to the solar calendar. Orthodox and Western Churches calculate differently when the intercalary adjustments should be made, so that there is no consistent relationship between the dates of the Orthodox and Western Easter.

20 [JAIN]

MAHAVIRA JAYANTI (599BCE): The birthday of the last Tirthanakara, or great teacher and model of the Jainas. His birth and the events surrounding it are re-enacted. If there are monks or nuns present, they will read from the scriptures and teach about the rest of Mahavira's life, following which lay people return home to a celebratory feast. P. 142-143, P. 144.

21- May 2
[BAHA'I]

RIDVAN: The most important Baha'i festival. It was in these 12 days that Baha'u'llah declared himself as the Promised One prophesied by the Bab. The festival is named after the garden outside Baghdad in which he was staying. The first, ninth and

23 [CHRISTIAN]

twelfth days are especially significant and celebrated as holy days when no work is done. It is during this period that Baha'is elect their local, national and international governing bodies. P. 23-25.

23 [JEWISH]

ST GEORGE'S DAY: The patron saint of England. His particular significance to England is not clear since he lived and died in the Middle East, but, quite possibly, his popularity grew after the Crusades, which adopted his red cross on a white background as their symbol.

27 [MUSLIM]

YOM HA-SHOAH [Holocaust Day]: A day of remembrance for the victims of the Nazi Holocaust. Memorial candles are lit and special services are held. P. 206.

AL-HIJRA - NEW YEAR'S DAY (1419 AH): Commemorates the Hijra or migration of the Prophet Muhammad from Makkah to Medina in 622CE which led to the establishment of the Muslim community. Muslim years are dated from this time and are termed AH [After the Hijrah]. In the celebration at the mosque stories are told of the Prophet and his companions. P. 213-215, P. 227-228.



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MAY 1998

6 [MUSLIM]

ASHURA: There are many important events which occurred on the 10th [Ashura] of Muharram [the first month of the Muslim calendar]. The Prophet Muhammad used to fast on this day. Ashura is a day of mourning for some Muslims, especially the Shi'ite communities, for the martyrdom of Husain, the second son of Ali and Fatimah [the prophet's daughter]. The celebrations of the sizeable Shi'ite communities in Iraq, Iran and the sub-continent of India are very impressive.

10-16 [CHRISTIAN]

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK: Initiated in 1945, this week is devoted to fund raising, mainly through house to house collections, by members of various churches. The money given is for work with the needy throughout the world.

14 [JEWISH]

LAG B'OMER: The Omer period of 49 days lasting from Pesah to Shavuot is a time of sadness, relieved on this, the 33rd day, when a plague in Roman times ended. It is often celebrated by outdoor celebrations. A large number of weddings take place which are not permitted during the other days of the Omer. P. 207.

9 [BUDDHIST]

VAISAKHA PUJA/WESAK: Theravadins celebrate the birth, enlightenment and final passing away of Gautama Buddha on this day. Mahayanists have separate days to celebrate them. Houses are decorated with lanterns and garlands, and in many countries captive birds are released to symbolise his compassion, and as an act of merit. A particular stress of the day is laid on his enlightenment and the release of the birds might also reflect that. Lay people come together at monasteries. In Britain, Vaisakha is sometimes called Bodhi Day. This is the biggest Buddhist Festival. P. 7, P. 45-47 Sri Lanka, P. 50 Thailand.

21 [CHRISTIAN]

ASCENSION DAY: The 40th day after Easter. It commemorates the last earthly appearance of the Risen Christ who ascended into heaven. Mark 16:19-20, Luke 24:50-53, Acts of the Apostles 1:9-11, P. 92.

23 [BAHA'I]

ANNIVERSARY OF THE DECLARATION OF THE BAB: The Bab heralded the arrival of Baha'u'llah and was co-founder of the Baha'i faith. He first declared his mission in Persia in 1844. He inaugurated the Baha'i calendar which numbers itself from the year of this declaration. P. 26.

29 [BAHA'I]

ANNIVERSARY OF THE ASCENSION OF BAHU'LLAH: Commemorates the death of Baha'u'llah at Bahji, near Acre in 1892. His Shrine is the place towards which all Baha'is face when praying. P. 27.

29 [ZORASTRIAN]

ZARTUSHT-NO-DISO: Commemorates the death of the prophet Zarathustra. Religious services are devoted to him and to the Fravashis - spirits of the dead. P. 255.

30 [CHINESE]

DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL: Most notable now for the great dragon boat races which take place between slim rowing boats (sometimes 100 feet long) shaped like a dragon. People also go down to the rivers and picnic and celebrate on boats. It originally commemorated the suicide by drowning of the poet and statesman Ch'u Yuan in about 279 BCE. P. 69-70, P. 71.

31 [CHRISTIAN]

PENTECOST/WHITSUNTIDE: An important festival in the Christian year. It is often seen as the 'birthday' of the Church, as it is when the disciples of Jesus first proclaimed the Gospel after receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is named after the Jewish festival on which this event happened. The alternative name comes from the custom of converts presenting themselves for baptism dressed in white on this day. In previous years, in Britain, Whit walks became associated with this time. Acts of the Apostles 2:1-13, P.92

31-1 June
[JEWISH]

SHAVUOT - [Festival of Weeks - Pentecost]: Comes seven weeks after Pesah [Passover]. It celebrates the revelation of the Torah on Mount Sinai and the early harvest season in Israel. Synagogues are decorated with flowers and dairy foods [such as blintzes and cheesecake] are eaten. Exodus 19 & 20, Leviticus 23:15-22, Deuteronomy 16:9-12, P. 184-187.

JUNE 1998

9 [BUDDHIST]

POSON/DHAMMA VIJAYA: Theravada festival which celebrates the first preaching of the Buddhist doctrine outside India, particularly in Sri Lanka. P. 47.

11 [CHRISTIAN]

CORPUS CHRISTI [CORPUS ET SANGUIS CHRISTI [Catholic]/DAY OF THANKSGIVING FOR THE INSTITUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION [Anglican]: Particularly Catholic festival to celebrate the Eucharist. P. 93.

13 [SIKH]

MARTYRDOM OF GURU ARJAN (1606): The fifth Guru was executed on the orders of the Moghul Emperor, Jehangir, for refusing to pay a fine arising from a charge of treason. Guru Arjan made the first compilation of the Sikh Scriptures, called the Adi Granth, and supervised the completion of the Golden Temple in Amritsar. A gurburb will be held which will take the same form as other gurburbs including an akhand path. P. 240-242, P. 244.

JULY 1998

- | | | |
|-------|---------------|---|
| 7 | [MUSLIM] | THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S BIRTHDAY - (20th August 570 CE): This is celebrated on 12th of Rabi-ul-Awwal, the third month of the Muslim calendar. In the sub-continent of India and some Arab Countries like Egypt, the celebration starts with reading from the Qur'an followed by poetry and songs in praise of the Prophet. There are also lectures and story telling. In some big cities of the Muslim world the day is marked with processions and flags waving under a huge decorations of lights. In the UK Muslims celebrate at the mosque. P. 230-231. |
| 7 | [HINDU] | RATHA YATRA - 'chariot journey: This is kept most notably at Puri in Orissa where processions of thousands of devotees push huge waggons [rathas] with images of Krishna, known under the name of 'Jagannath' ['Lord of the Universe'], from which the name 'juggernaut' comes in English. Krishna is attended by his brother and sister. It is celebrated in Britain [chiefly by the International Society for Krishna Consciousness] with a procession through London on a Sunday. P. 123. |
| 9 | [BAHA'I] | ANNIVERSARY OF THE MARTYRDOM OF THE BAB: The Bab was executed by firing squad in Tabriz, Persia at noon in 1850. The Bab's death is commemorated at noon with readings and prayers from Baha'i Scriptures. P. 26-27. |
| 13-15 | [JAPANESE] | O-BON: Japanese festival when the spirits of the departed are welcomed back home with feasting and dancing. Fires are also often lit to light their arrival and departure. P. 162-163. |
| 17 | [CHINESE] | CHUNG YUAN: Chinese Buddhist and ancestral festival also called 'Festival of Hungry Ghosts'. Paper objects for use in the spirit world are made and offered to aid spirits who have no resting place or descendants. Large paper boats are made and burnt at temples to help spirits on their journey across the sea of torment to Nirvana. |
| 19 | [BUDDHIST] | ASALA - (Dhammacakka Day - Turning of the Wheel of Teaching): Theravada celebration of the First Proclamation by Gautama to five ascetics in the Deer Park near Benares. This taught the Middle Way, the Noble Eightfold Path and the Four Noble Truths. P. 47. |
| 23 | [RASTAFARIAN] | BIRTHDAY OF HAILE SELASSIE I: One of the holiest days of the Rastafarian year. It is celebrated with Nyahbinghi drumming, hymns and prayers. |

AUGUST 1998

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|-------|--------------|--|
| 2 | [JEWISH] | TISHA B'AV: Full day fast mourning the destruction of the first and second Temples in Jerusalem and other tragedies in Jewish history. The Book of Lamentations is read. |
| 6 | [CHRISTIAN] | THE TRANSFIGURATION: When Jesus went up a mountain with three of his disciples, Peter, James and John. They saw him transformed, saw Moses and Elijah with him and heard a voice saying, "This is my own dear Son with whom I am pleased - listen to him". For Christians, this confirms the divine nature of Jesus. An important festival for Orthodox Christians. Matthew 17:1-17, Mark 9:2-13 and Luke 9:28-36. P. 101. |
| 7 | [HINDU] | RAKSHA BANDHAN: This festival is about brotherly protection ['raksha' means 'protection' and 'bandhan' 'to tie']. Sisters tie coloured thread amulets on to their brothers' wrists and give them an Indian sweet. The amulet symbolises protection from evil. They are given gifts [usually money] in return. NB Cousins are included as brothers and sisters. P. 126-127. |
| 12-21 | [ZORASTRIAN] | FARVARDIGAN: Last ten days of the year during which the Fravashis or souls of the departed are welcomed and entertained. The five Gathas or hymns composed by Zarathustra are recited on the last five "Gatha" days. P.250-252. |
| 14 | [HINDU] | JANAMASHTAMI/KRISHNA JAYANTI-Birthday of Krishna: Krishna is a very popular avatar or incarnation of Vishnu and this festival is celebrated widely. Many Hindus fast till midnight, the time of Krishna's birth. Those unable to fast will take fruit and milk. In the temples Krishna is welcomed with singing, dancing and sweets. In some homes and in temples an image of the newborn Krishna is put in a cradle and special sweets [eg the powder panjiri, given traditionally to women after childbirth] are offered and distributed. P. 129-130. |
| 15 | [CHRISTIAN] | ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY: Celebrates the 'taking up' of Mary, body and soul, to Heaven. Most Catholic communities mark the festival with processions and fetes. On this day the Dormition (Falling-Asleep of the Blessed Virgin Mary) is kept by Orthodox Christians. The Falling-Asleep means the death. P.97-98 |
| 22 | [ZORASTRIAN] | NO RUZ: New Year's Day on the Shenshai calendar. P. 252-253. |
| 27 | [ZORASTRIAN] | KHORDAD SAL: Birthday of Zarathustra. P. 252-255. |
| 28 | [HINDU] | GANESH-CHATURTHI: Birthday of Ganesha. The elephant-headed deity is seen as the remover of obstacles and is worshipped at the beginning of all new projects such as getting married, taking exams or moving house. This festival is especially observed by Maharashtrians. P. 128-129. |

SEPTEMBER 1998

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <p>* Sept/Oct
[CHRISTIAN]</p> | <p>HARVEST FESTIVAL: Displays of various foods are made in church and services are held to thank God for his goodness. Often the food is distributed afterwards to the elderly and those in need. Emphasis is now placed on the fruits of society and a wider interpretation than just the harvest of the fields is made. P. 82.</p> |
| <p>11 [RASTAFARIANS]</p> | <p>ETHIOPIAN NEW YEAR'S DAY: Rastafarians have a four year cycle, each year named after an apostle. This is the beginning of the year of Luke.</p> |
| <p>11-20 [JAIN]</p> | <p>PARYUSHANA-PARVA: Various celebrated as an eight or ten day period. Mendicant teachers, whose lifestyle is emulated by lay Jains during this time, give sermons about Mahavira and his teachings and read the Kalpa Sutra. On the last day, confession of all sins is made and the forgiveness of friends and relatives is sought before resolving goodwill to all humanity. P. 146-147.</p> |
| <p>21-22 [JEWISH]</p> | <p>ROSH HASHANA [New Year's Day - 5759]: Celebrates the creation of the world. This festival begins ten days of repentance and self examination during which God sits in judgement on every individual. The blowing of the ram's horn [shofar] in the synagogue is a reminder of Abraham's sacrifice of a ram instead of his son, Isaac. Apples dipped in honey are eaten in the hope of a 'sweet' year. The greeting is Leshanah Tovah Tikatev [May you be inscribed for a good year]. Genesis 22 Leviticus 23:24-25. P. 193-196.</p> |
| <p>21-30 [HINDU]</p> | <p>NAVARATRI/DURGA PUJA/DUSSERAH: While known by different names, this is one of the few festivals celebrated across India. Navaratri means 'nine nights' which is how long the festival lasts. The last three days are the most important. In North India the performance of the Ram lila during Durga Puja commemorates Rama's victory over Ravana, the demon king of Sri Lanka. Also in Northern India, and in Bengal in particular, the goddess Durga is worshipped on the eighth day. Some Panjabis mark this day by giving food and other items to young girls. P. 130-133.</p> |
| <p>23 [JAPANESE]</p> | <p>SHUBUN NO HI (Higan): Marks the autumn equinox. As at the spring equinox, harmony and balance are the themes, sutras are recited and the graves of relatives are visited. P. 164.</p> |
| <p>30 [JEWISH]</p> | <p>YOM KIPPUR [Day of Atonement]: This is the final day of the ten days of repentance. It is the holiest day of the year in the Jewish calendar. The Bible calls it "the Sabbath of Sabbaths" which is also marked by "afflicting the soul" - expressed through a total fast lasting 25 hours. Jews spend the eve and most of the day in prayer asking for forgiveness for past wrongs and resolving to improve in future. The Book of Jonah is read. A common greeting is G'mar Chatimah Tovah [May you finally be sealed for good]. Leviticus 16:4-34, Leviticus 23:27-32. P. 196-199.</p> |

OCTOBER 1998

* [BUDDHIST]	KATHINA DAY: At the end of the three months' Rains Retreat of monks in Theravada Buddhism, new Kathina robes are offered by lay people. The date varies according to the rainy season in different countries. P.43, P.48 [Sri Lanka], P.49-50 [Burma], P. 52 [Thailand].
5-13 [JEWISH]	SUKKOT: A harvest festival commemorating the 40 years that the Jews spent in the wilderness on the way from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. A temporary hut or booth - called a Sukkah - is used during this time to eat meals in and for socialising. In hot countries families may live in them during the festival. The roof, which has to be open to the elements, is covered with branches and decorated with fruit. Four species, the lulav [the palm branch], the etrog [a citrus fruit], the hadas [myrtle] and the aravah [willow] are used at the festival. Leviticus 23:33-43 P. 187-190
13 [JEWISH]	SIMCHAT TORAH: Marks the completion of the annual cycle of reading from the Torah. As the reading should be continuous, a second scroll is begun again as soon as the final portion of the Torah is read; so, as the reading from Deuteronomy ends, with the next breath, Genesis begins. All the Torah scrolls are paraded around the synagogue with children dancing and singing. Progressive Jews celebrate this festival one day earlier. P.191-193.
19-23 [HINDU]	DIVALI (DEEPAVALI): In Hinduism, a New Year Festival lasting one to five days, during which lights are hung out and fireworks are exploded. For both Hindus and Sikhs it is a festival of light coinciding with the darkest night of the lunar month. Various interpretations are given to the festival in different parts of India but it is generally associated with Lakshmi, goddess of wealth and prosperity or with the victorious return of Rama and Sita to the kingdom of Ayodhya after the exile. Diwali marks the beginning of the financial year. p. 134-136.
[SIKH]	Sikhs also celebrate Diwali as the sixth Guru, Guru Hargobind, was released from Gwalior prison on this day. The Guru refused to accept release when it was given by the Emperor, Jehangir, until 52 imprisoned Hindu princes were also given their freedom. To meet the Emperor's condition that only those who could hold onto his cloak could leave, the Guru had a coat with long tassels made. The Golden Temple in Amritsar is illuminated and there are firework displays. It is a time for new clothes, presents and sweets. P. 237-239.
20 [BAHA'I]	ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF THE BAB: The Bab [the title means "Gate"] was born in Shiraz, Persia in 1819. He called people to religious renewal and to await the coming of a new messenger from God. Baha'is believe that this latter figure was Baha'u'llah. P. 26.

11-18

[CHRISTIAN]

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR WORLD PEACE: Prayers from the sources of several different world religions are published each year in a special leaflet for use in this week. This receives the support of members of many religious communities.

NOVEMBER 1998

1

ALL SAINTS' DAY: (All Hallows', originally All Martyrs) This provides a chance to offer thanks for the work and witness of all saints, recognizing that not all are known or specially celebrated. Many Churches stress this day, rather than Hallowe'en which falls the day before, by holding events especially for children. P. 99-100

2

[CHRISTIAN]

ALL SOULS' DAY: On this day in particular the departed are remembered and prayed for.

2

[RASTAFARIANS]

ANNIVERSARY OF THE CROWNING OF HAILE

SELASSIE I: One of the holiest days of the Rastafarian year, it celebrates Haile Selassie's accession to the Ethiopian throne.

4

[SIKH]

BIRTHDAY OF GURU NANAK: (1469) The first Sikh Guru. To celebrate such birthdays, an akhand path, a complete uninterrupted reading of the Guru Granth Sahib, is begun about two days before so that it will be finished on the festival. Sikhs gather at the gurdwara to hear sermons and sing hymns about the life of the first Guru. The congregation will share a meal [langar] from the free kitchen. The gurdwaras are usually illuminated and there are firework displays. P. 240-242, P. 244.

8

[NATIONAL]

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY: The Sunday nearest to Armistice Day, devoted to remembering the dead of two World Wars and subsequent wars.

12

[BAHA'I]

ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF BAHU'LLAH: Founder of the Baha'i faith who was born, eldest son of a Persian nobleman, in Tehran, Persia in 1817. P. 26.

15

[MUSLIM]

THE PROPHET'S NIGHT JOURNEY AND ASCENSION [LAILAT-UL-ISRA' WAL MI'RAJ]: Celebrates the journey of the Prophet Muhammad, in the tenth year of his prophethood, from Makkah to Jerusalem and through the heavens to the presence of God all in a night. On the Journey, the command to pray five times a day was given. The rock in Jerusalem from which Muhammad ascended is now marked by the Dome of the Rock. Muslims celebrate by reading the Qur'an and saying additional prayers. Sura:2:144, 17:1. The full story is in the Hadith together with the times of prayer. P. 231.

- 15 [JAPANESE] **SHICHI-GO-SAN:** (Seven-Five-Three) Girls of seven, boys of five and girls of three are dressed up in new clothes and taken to a Shinto shrine to pray for their future wellbeing. P. 166.
- 24 [SIKH] **MARTYRDOM OF GURU TEGH BAHADUR - (1675):** The ninth Guru was executed under orders from the Moghul emperor in public opposite the Red Fort in Delhi for upholding an individual's right to worship in the manner of his /her choice. P.240-242, P.244.
- 29 [CHRISTIAN] **ADVENT SUNDAY:** The start of the Christian year four Sundays before Christmas. It is often celebrated by lighting the first candle in the advent crown - a circular wreath of greenery. A further three candles are lit on subsequent Sundays, culminating with the Christmas candle on the 25th December. This signifies the transition from darkness to light. P. 82-83.
- 30 [CHRISTIAN] **ST ANDREW'S DAY:** The patron saint of Scotland since the 8th century. Andrew was an apostle and brother of Peter. In the Anglican communion he is associated with missionary activity. P.100.

DECEMBER 1998

- 3 [MUSLIM] **THE NIGHT OF FORGIVENESS [LAILAT-UL-BARA'H]:** On the fourteenth of Sha'ban, the eighth month of the Muslim Calendar and two weeks before Ramadan, Muslims seek forgiveness for their sins. Muslims believe that it is on this night that a person's destiny is fixed for the coming year by God. The night is spent in prayer asking God's guidance and forgiveness. Many Muslims fast on the 14th in preparation for this night. In some parts of the world, Muslims visit the graves of relatives and the giving of charity is also traditional. In some places the night is marked with firework displays. P. 233.
- 8 [BUDDHIST] **BODHI DAY:** Some Buddhists celebrate Gautama's attainment of Enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree in Bodhgaya, North India, on this day. P. 45-47 Sri Lanka, P. 49 Burma, P. 50 Thailand, P54 Tibet [all Birth, Enlightenment and Death].
- 8 [CHRISTIAN] **IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY:** Celebrates the [mainly Roman Catholic] doctrine that Mary herself was born free from Original Sin, leaving her sinless for the bearing of Jesus. P. 96.

THE ORTHODOX CALENDAR

The 1998 Orthodox Church Calendar, according to the 'Old' [Julian] or 'New' [revised Julian] Calendar published by The Orthodox Fellowship of St John the Baptist will be obtainable in December 1997 from:
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14-21 (JEWISH)

HANUKAH: Celebrates the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem after it was recaptured from the Syrian Greeks by the Maccabee brothers in 165 BCE. For the eight evenings of the festival, candles are lit from right to left in a hanukkah, a nine-branched menorah - one candle for each evening. The ninth candle is the shamash [the servant candle] from which the other candles are lit. Foods cooked with oil - such as doughnuts and latkes [potato cakes] are traditional to remember the miracle with oil that happened at this time. A game of dreidel is popular with children to commemorate "the great miracle that happened there". P. 201-205.

19 Dec-17 Jan 99

(MUSLIM)

RAMADAN: The month of fasting from dawn to sunset. To the Muslim, fasting means abstaining from all food, drink, smoking and marital relations during daylight hours. It is an exercise in self-discipline and enables everyone to have some experience of deprivation. Fasting [sawm] is one of the five pillars of Islam. After the custom of the Prophet, the fast is traditionally broken by taking dates and water. Travellers, those who are sick and women who are pregnant or menstruating are temporarily excused from fasting but they will make this up at another time. Those who are not able to fast should give charity to compensate for the lost days. Children may be encouraged to fast although it is not compulsory until maturity. As the Muslim year is a lunar year, Ramadan moves forward by ten/eleven days every year. Surah 2:183-188. P.218-220.

24 (CHRISTIAN)

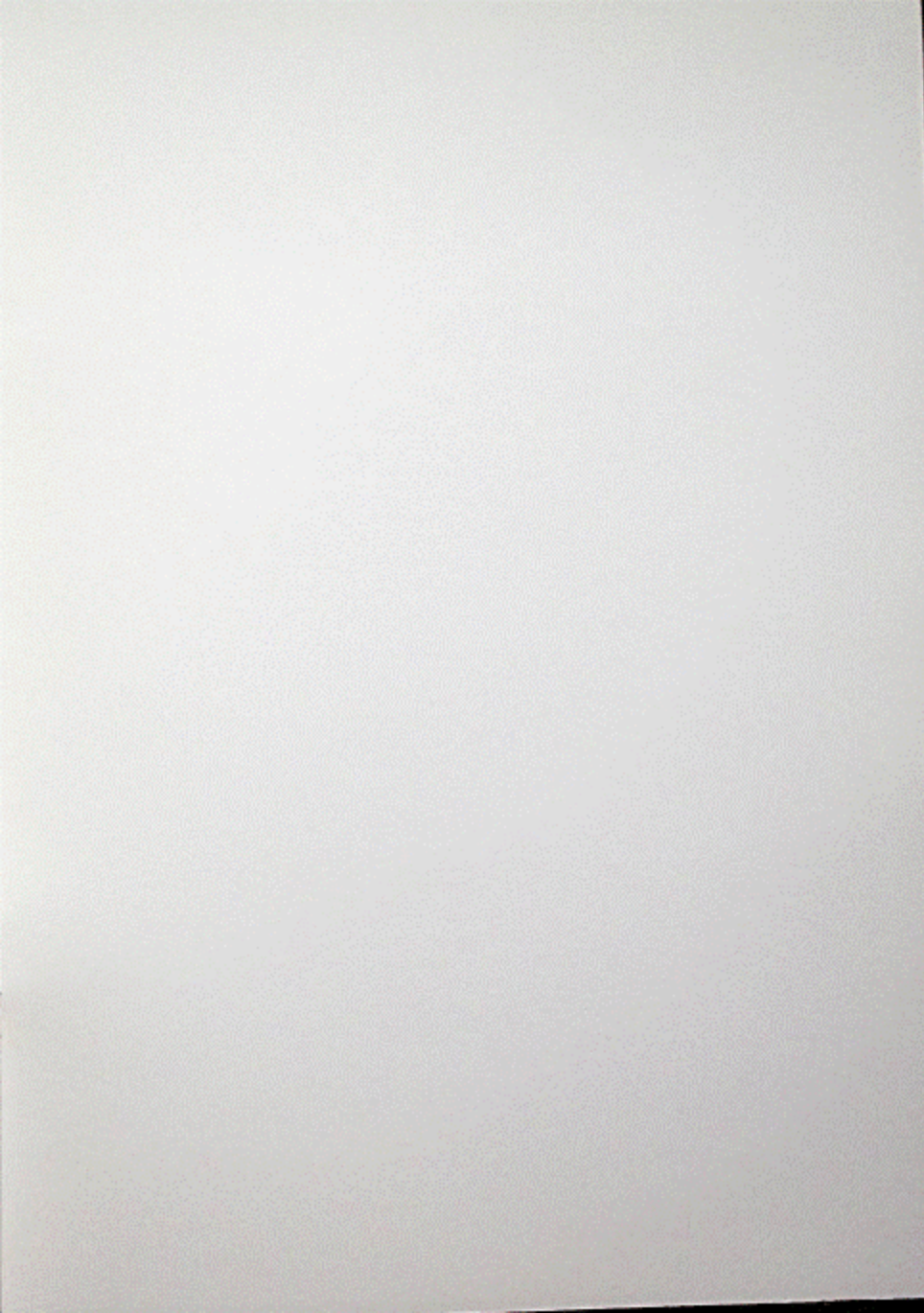
CHRISTMAS EVE: Evening carol services and Midnight Masses inaugurate Christmas. Santa Claus [from the Dutch Sinter Klaus] is a legendary figure based on St Nicholas of Myra, who is supposed to bring presents to children on Christmas Eve. P. 83, P. 84.

25 (CHRISTIAN)

CHRISTMAS DAY: Celebrates the birth of Jesus who Christians believe to be the son of God. The Christian focus on the Incarnation [God becoming man] has led this to be a major festival in the Christian faith, although the over-commercialisation and secularisation of Christmas has obscured some of the significance of this festival. Christmas carols, plays and evergreens are associated with this time and nativity sets are displayed in many churches and in some homes. Gifts are reminders of the offerings brought to the infant Jesus. Originally these and Christmas boxes were given on the 26th December - Boxing Day. Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 2:1-7 P. 83-85.

31 (JAPANESE)

OMISOKA: Japanese festival which prepares for the new year by cleansing (Shinto-related) home shrines and (Buddhist-related) altars. The bells of Buddhist temples are struck 108 times to warn against the 108 evils to be overcome. P. 168.



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